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FARM BUSINESS FACTS

A radio discussion by John A. Baker, Radio Service, and Marvin M. Sandstrom, Agricultural Marketing Service, presented during the Department of Agriculture portion of the National Farm and Home hour, Friday, June 28, 1940, over the blue network of the National Broadcasting Company.

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BAKER:

From the Agricultural Marketing Service, we have the June Pig Crop Report. Marvin M. Sandstrom is here to tell us how the 1940 pig crop is showing up. And I believe, Sandy, that you have information not only on the pigs farrowed during the spring season but also on what the indications are for the fall pig crop.

SANDSTROM:

You are right, John. A report on the spring pig crop, and on prospects for the fall pigs - and in general they show that farmers will produce a lot fewer pigs this year than last. But - except for last year - these same indications point to the largest pig crop since 1933.

BAKER:

That's for the spring pigs and the fall pigs taken together?

SANDSTROM:

Yes, the 1940 pig crop as a whole. This year's spring pig crop is now estimated to be 8 percent smaller than last year. About 7 percent fewer sows were farrowed and the average size of the litters was the smallest in any of the past 4 years.

BAKER:

So we have 8 percent fewer spring pigs than last year. How about prospects for the pigs that are to come this fall?

SANDSTROM:

Well, the facts we have to go by are farmers' intentions reports as to the number of sows to be kept for farrow. From these reports, fall prospects are for about 12 percent fewer sows to farrow than were farrowed last fall.

BAKER:

And, with this prospect for fall farrowing ---

SANDSTROM:

Production of all pigs for the year is likely to reach nearly 76 million head or about 10 percent below what it was last year. A pig crop of this size also would be about 3 percent below the average crop during the pre-drought years of 1924 through 1933.

BAKER:

Is this reduction in number of pigs from last year pretty uniform over the country?

SANDSTROM:

No it isn't, but all regions show decreases. In the Eastern Corn Belt, farmers report only 1 percent fewer spring pigs than last year. In the Western Corn Belt the spring crop is 7 percent smaller than in 1939.

(Over)

BAKER:

How about other parts of the country?

SANDSTROM:

Southern farmers have produced 19 to 20 percent fewer spring pigs than last year. In the North Atlantic States a 9 percent reduction is reported. And in the Western States 7 percent fewer spring pigs are reported.

BAKER:

But, Sandy, for the past several years hog production has been going up.

SANDSTROM:

It has - until this year. It appears that in the current cycle of "hog growing," hog production reached its peak, this past year - in 1939.

BAKER:

And has started into the decline that usually follows 2 or 3 years of increase?

SANDSTROM:

We're not estimating next year's pigs yet, John. But that's about the way hog production usually has run in past years. First a few years of increasing numbers - and then a few years of decrease.

BAKER:

That sums up the situation for pigs raised this year. But what about old hogs - last year's pigs - that farmers still have?

SANDSTROM:

The number of hogs 6 months and older reported on farms June 1 was about 13 percent larger than a year earlier. That's about 3 million head more - and means relatively heavy market supplies during the last 4 months of the present hog-marketing year - the months of June through September.

BAKER:

So the 1940 spring and fall pig crops probably will add up to about 10 percent fewer pigs than we had last year?

SANDSTROM:

That's right.

BAKER:

But with 13 percent more hogs over 6 months old than were reported for June 1 last year, the supply of all hogs available for market during the June-September period is materially larger this year than last.

SANDSTROM:

Right again.

BAKER:

That's a pretty good report on the pig crops and prospects for hogs that will be available for market during the last 4 months of the 1939-40 hog-marketing year. Thanks, Sandy, for this summary.

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